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APPLICATION NO.	FILING DATE	FIRST NAMED INVENTOR	ATTORNEY DOCKET NO.	CONFIRMATION NO.
09/437,924	11/10/1999	TAKASHI HIROSE	P/2371-27	8642

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EXAMINER

WU, ALLEN S

ART UNIT	PAPER NUMBER
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2135

DATE MAILED: 07/12/2004

9

Please find below and/or attached an Office communication concerning this application or proceeding.

Office Action Summary

Application No.

09/437,924

Applicant(s)

HIROSE, TAKASHI

Examiner

Allen S. Wu

Art Unit

2135

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address --

Period for Reply

A SHORTENED STATUTORY PERIOD FOR REPLY IS SET TO EXPIRE 3 MONTH(S) FROM THE MAILING DATE OF THIS COMMUNICATION.

- Extensions of time may be available under the provisions of 37 CFR 1.136(a). In no event, however, may a reply be timely filed after SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- If the period for reply specified above is less than thirty (30) days, a reply within the statutory minimum of thirty (30) days will be considered timely.
- If NO period for reply is specified above, the maximum statutory period will apply and will expire SIX (6) MONTHS from the mailing date of this communication.
- Failure to reply within the set or extended period for reply will, by statute, cause the application to become ABANDONED (35 U.S.C. § 133). Any reply received by the Office later than three months after the mailing date of this communication, even if timely filed, may reduce any earned patent term adjustment. See 37 CFR 1.704(b).

Status

- 1) ☒ Responsive to communication(s) filed on 15 April 2004.
- 2a) ☒ This action is **FINAL**. 2b) ☐ This action is non-final.
- 3) ☐ Since this application is in condition for allowance except for formal matters, prosecution as to the merits is closed in accordance with the practice under *Ex parte Quayle*, 1935 C.D. 11, 453 O.G. 213.

Disposition of Claims

- 4) ☒ Claim(s) 13-22 is/are pending in the application.
- 4a) Of the above claim(s) _____ is/are withdrawn from consideration.
- 5) ☐ Claim(s) _____ is/are allowed.
- 6) ☒ Claim(s) 13-18 and 20-22 is/are rejected.
- 7) ☒ Claim(s) 19 is/are objected to.
- 8) ☐ Claim(s) _____ are subject to restriction and/or election requirement.

Application Papers

- 9) ☐ The specification is objected to by the Examiner.
- 10) ☒ The drawing(s) filed on 10 November 1999 is/are: a) ☒ accepted or b) ☐ objected to by the Examiner.
Applicant may not request that any objection to the drawing(s) be held in abeyance. See 37 CFR 1.85(a).
Replacement drawing sheet(s) including the correction is required if the drawing(s) is objected to. See 37 CFR 1.121(d).
- 11) ☐ The oath or declaration is objected to by the Examiner. Note the attached Office Action or form PTO-152.

Priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119

- 12) ☒ Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
- a) ☐ All b) ☐ Some * c) ☒ None of:
- 1) ☒ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
- 2) ☐ Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
- 3) ☐ Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this National Stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* See the attached detailed Office action for a list of the certified copies not received.

Attachment(s)

- 1) ☒ Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
- 2) ☒ Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
- 3) ☒ Information Disclosure Statement(s) (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date 6.
- 4) ☐ Interview Summary (PTO-413)
Paper No(s)/Mail Date. _____.
- 5) ☐ Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
- 6) ☐ Other: _____.

DETAILED ACTION

Claim Rejections - 35 USC § 103

1. The following is a quotation of 35 U.S.C. 103(a) which forms the basis for all obviousness rejections set forth in this Office action:

(a) A patent may not be obtained though the invention is not identically disclosed or described as set forth in section 102 of this title, if the differences between the subject matter sought to be patented and the prior art are such that the subject matter as a whole would have been obvious at the time the invention was made to a person having ordinary skill in the art to which said subject matter pertains. Patentability shall not be negated by the manner in which the invention was made.

2. Claims 13-18 and 20-22 are rejected under 35 U.S.C. 103(a) as being unpatentable over Houser et al (hereinafter Houser), US Patent 5,606,609.

As per claim 13, Houser discloses a document management system (abstract, fig 1) comprising a plurality of computer systems, each operating as a terminal coupled together on a network securely coupled to outside the network (see for example; col 8 ln 50-65), storing and managing an electronic document and, for any stored electronic document, storing a document number associated with the document (see for example; col 3 ln 50-60 and col 11 ln 18-24), and attest data, the attest data comprising signature image data (see for example; col 4 ln 47-60), signer ID number (see for example; col 12 ln 55-67), an ID number of the attest data storage system associated with the document (see fore example; path input, col 20 ln 24-38), and a serial usage number relating to the document (see for example; col 11 ln 19-21 and col 14 ln 11-24),

wherein, when a person utilizing one of the computer terminals, and authorized to access the electronic document (see for example; col 15 ln 25-36),

requests a display or printing of image data of the document (see for example; col 16 ln 34-51 and fig 7E) displays or prints data of a total image of the requested document (see for example; col 15 ln 25-35), the total image comprising the electronic document, a document name, the document number, the ID number of the document data storage system (see for example; col 11 ln 11-25 and col 12 ln 40-54), as well as information of one or more signature images (see for example; col 7 ln 61-65 and col 16 ln 34-51 and fig 7E), and the serial usage number of the signature image data (see for example; col 12 ln 55-67).

As for a plurality of attest data storage systems being coupled together on a network securely coupled to outside the network, Houser further discloses attest data storage (security logs) on different computers on the network (see for example; col 14 ln 25-35 and col 20 ln 24-39), thus a plurality of attest data storage systems.

Houser further discloses document storage at different computers (see for example; document file path, col 12 ln 40-54). Houser further discloses use of bar codes for representing attest information (see for example; col 18 ln 65-67). Houser does not explicitly teach the document storage system displaying or printing data attached bar codes representing said document and ID number, one or more signature images, the signer ID number including the ID number of the attest storage system, the serial usage number of the signature image data, and attached bar codes representing said numbers in the vicinity of the original

signature image. Wang discloses a barcode for encoding such information for ease of document managing (see for example; col 3 ln 17-30) and a document storage system (database server) for printing such barcodes (see for example; col 3 ln 64-66 and col 5 ln 12-29). Wang further discloses the convenience of barcodes for ease of retrieval (see for example; col 4 ln 20-29, ln 54-58, and col 5 ln 51-55). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the teachings of Wang within the system of Houser because it would have provided a more convenient means of accessing and verifying documents and reduced error due to manual entry.

As for printing the ID number of the document storage system, Houser discloses an ID of the document storage system (see for example; col 12 ln 45-48), however Houser does not explicitly teach printing the ID number of the document storage system. Wang further discloses that the document storage ID number being printed (see for example; col 5 ln 45-55, the document storage ID number must be printed in order to retrieve the corresponding document from the correct document storage system).

As for printing the signer ID number including the ID number of the attest storage system, Houser further discloses the use of signor ID number including the ID number of the attest storage system (see for example; col 20 ln 25-38). Wang also discloses the use of signor ID and such printing for verification purposes (see for example; col 3 ln 17-30). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine such

printing of Wang within the system of Houser because it would have increased convenience of document retrieval and verification as well as decrease error due to manual entry.

As per claim 14, Houser-Wang discloses the claimed limitations as described above (see claim 13). Houser further discloses the document data storage system, after obtaining the signer's approval, requests the attest data storage system to deliver the attest data stored therein (see for example; col 14 ln 10-24);

each attest data storage system securely stores and manages the attest data used for evidence of approval by an authorized individual person or corporation (see for example; security log, col 10 ln 60-67); and

a signer who is the owner of a signature or seal (see for example; reviewer, col 20 ln 24-39), can register with the attest data storage system beforehand securely his/her own signature image data as evidence of formal approval (see for example; col 9 ln 61-67 and col 10 ln 17-51), such that it is impossible for others to register or change the registered attest data, the attest data of the signer comprising the signature image data (see for example; col 10 ln 17-51), the signer ID number (see for example; name, col 12 ln 55-67), the ID number of the attest data storage system (see for example; col 20 ln 24-38; the attest data storage system may be located on a network wherein the ID number (path) must be entered in order to retrieve the signer information) and the serial

usage number created when signer approves the document (see for example; col 12 ln 55-67).

As per claim 15, Houser-Wang discloses the claimed limitations as described above (see claim 14). Houser further discloses wherein the signer ID number includes the ID number of the attest data storage system (see for example; col 20 ln 24-38, each signor is associated with an attest data storage system and thus the ID pertains to the signer and attest storage system).

As per claim 16, Houser-Wang discloses the claimed limitations as described above (see claim 14). Houser further discloses wherein the serial usage number includes the data information (see for example; time of insertion col 11 ln 20-25).

As per claim 17, Houser-Wang discloses the claimed limitations as described above (see claim 13). Houser further discloses the attest data storage system records the approved document number, the ID number of the document storage system and the serial usage number, with reference to each signature image (see for example; security log, col 10 ln 61-col 11 ln 34); and delivers the attest data together with the signer ID number to the document data storage system, upon receipt of a request over the network from the document data

storage system, after having received, approval from the signer using the computer system (see for example; col 20 ln 24-38).

As per claim 18, Houser-Wang discloses the claimed limitations as described above (see claim 17). Houser further discloses wherein each of the computer systems has an electronic document creating function for creating a document body (see for example; col 7 ln 29-43), a telecommunication function for securely transmitting/receiving the electronic documents (see for example; col 8 ln 50-65), an authorizing function for authorizing an electronic document by transmitting signature data together with the document, and an output function for printing and displaying said total image data of the requested electronic document (see for example; col 16 ln 34-51).

As per claim 20, Houser-Wang discloses the claimed limitations as described above (see claim 13). Houser further discloses a person securely accesses the document data storage system and the attest data storage system using one of a plurality of computer systems coupled together on the network (see for example; col 7 ln 29-43, col 16 ln 24-51, and col 20 ln 24-38) and display or printing of the document being effected in response to: an input of the signer ID number and the serial usage number (see for example; col 20 ln 24-38). Houser does not explicitly teach inputting a barcode associated with a desired document number using a barcode reader to read and input data to the

document management system, display and printing of the document being effected in response to: an input of the signer ID number and the serial usage number using the barcode reader; and an input of that data to the attest data storage system. Wang further discloses such inputting and display and printing of the document (see for example; col 5 ln 37-56). Wang further discloses the convenience of barcodes for ease of retrieval (see for example; col 4 ln 20-29, ln 54-58, and col 5 ln 51-55). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the teachings of Wang within the system of Houser because it would have provided a more convenient means of accessing and verifying documents and reduced error due to manual input.

As per claim 21, Houser-Wang discloses the claimed limitations as described above (see claim 13). Houser further discloses document storage system ID number, the document number, the signer ID number, and signature usage number used for verification of the document and signature (see for example; col 4 ln 35-60 and col 11 ln 11-34). Houser does not explicitly teach such numbers being expressed by bar codes and allowing verification of the document and signature by a bar code reader or scanner or digital camera connected to the computer system through the network, the computer system being operable to recognize automatically the barcode and access and verify the appropriate document data storage system and attest data storage system.

Wang further discloses use of barcodes for encoding identification information for access and verification using a bar code reader or scanner (see for example; col 4 In 54-67). Wang further discloses the convenience of barcodes for ease of retrieval (see for example; col 4 In 20-29, In 54-58, and col 5 In 51-55). It would have been obvious to one of ordinary skill in the art at the time of the applicant's invention to combine the teachings of Wang within the system of Houser because it would have provided a more convenient means of accessing and verifying documents and reduced error due to manual input.

As per claim 22, Houser-Wang discloses the claimed limitations as described above (see claim 13). Houser further discloses wherein the person who registered the signature image data or seal image in the attest data storage system accesses to the system securely using one of the plurality of computer systems connecting the network using the signer ID number and a password (see for example; col 20 In 24-38) so the system can display usage records of the signature image data (see for example; security log, col 10 In 61-67 and col 11 In 1-34), and the approved electronic document (see for example; col 20 In 24-38).

Allowable Subject Matter

3. Claim 19 is objected to as being dependent upon a rejected base claim, but would be allowable if rewritten in independent form including all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims.

Conclusion

4. The prior art made of record and not relied upon is considered pertinent to applicant's disclosure.

Hayosh, US Patent 6,212,504 discloses a means of using barcodes for identification and verification of electronic documents.

5. **THIS ACTION IS MADE FINAL.** Applicant is reminded of the extension of time policy as set forth in 37 CFR 1.136(a).

A shortened statutory period for reply to this final action is set to expire THREE MONTHS from the mailing date of this action. In the event a first reply is filed within TWO MONTHS of the mailing date of this final action and the advisory action is not mailed until after the end of the THREE-MONTH shortened statutory period, then the shortened statutory period will expire on the date the advisory action is mailed, and any extension fee pursuant to 37 CFR 1.136(a) will be calculated from the mailing date of the advisory action. In no event, however, will the statutory period for reply expire later than SIX MONTHS from the mailing date of this final action.


Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Allen S. Wu whose telephone number is 703-305-0708. The examiner can normally be reached on Monday-Friday 9am-5pm.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, Kim Vu can be reached on 703-305-4393. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

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